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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 009219

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LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA  
DEPT FOR G/TIP (MILLER, TAYLOR, PATEL), NEA/ARPI (SHUKAN),  
INL, DRL, PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [OTRA](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR JANUARY 20-23, 2006  
G/TIP VISIT

REF: SECSTATE 212957

1. The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia welcomes the visit of Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP) Director Ambassador John R. Miller, G/TIP's Senior Coordinator for Reports Mark Taylor, and G/TIP's Reports Officer for NEA Gayatri Patel, and grants to them country clearance for a January 20-23, 2006, visit to Riyadh (reftel). Mr. Taylor and Ms. Patel arrive on January 20 while Ambassador Miller arrives on January 21. All depart post on January 23. The purpose of the travel is to: strengthen the bilateral dialogue with the SAG on TIP issues; hold consultations with post programs; obtain fresh data for the 2006 TIP Report; and discuss TIP trends and possible reforms with SAG officials and other interested parties.

2. Mission control officer will be TIP coordinator political attache Michael Boynton. He will meet upon arrival and transportation will be provided. Contact numbers are Embassy MSG Post 1 - (966-1)488-3800 ext. 4111; Embassy motorpool -(966-1) 488-3800 ext. 4252; control officer home (966-1) 482-3597, office ext.4097, cell phone 050-306-5570. Lodging in Riyadh has been arranged at the Holiday Inn Olaya, tel. 966-1-461-2000, fax 966-1-461-2595, rate is \$106 which includes 15 percent service fee, taxes, and breakfast. Per diem for Riyadh is \$153 lodging and \$97 MI&E.

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Standard Advice To Travelers  
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3. Visas: Visitors are reminded that valid visas for Saudi Arabia are required at all times. Official travelers to Saudi Arabia should request a two-year, multiple-entry visa from the nearest Saudi Embassy or Consulate. The SAG will not issue a visa if a passport shows travel to/from Israel.

4. Security: As a result of the continuing terrorist threat in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates General in Saudi Arabia became one-year unaccompanied posts effective August 12, 2004.

5. On December 6, 2004 there was an armed attack on the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah, resulting in casualties among the non-American staff and damage to consulate facilities. Due to such targeted attacks against American facilities and citizens, resulting in deaths, injuries and kidnappings, and the continuing serious threat to their safety while in Saudi Arabia, the Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens to defer travel to Saudi Arabia.

6. TDYers are reminded of the potential for further terrorist actions against U.S. citizens abroad, including in the Persian Gulf region. U.S.G. employees who travel to Saudi Arabia are required to follow all security precautions as prescribed by the RSO including the use of armored vehicles. From time to time, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Saudi Arabia may restrict the travel of official Americans or suspend public services for security reasons.

7. Although counter-terrorism efforts have succeeded in diminishing terrorist capabilities in Saudi Arabia, terrorist groups continue to target housing compounds, hotels, methods of transportation, and commercial establishments where Westerners can be found. SAG facilities are also targets as demonstrated by the December 29, 2004 attempted bombing of the Interior Ministry. In addition to car bombs and armed assaults involving multiple gunmen against such facilities, terrorists have also used ambush attacks to kidnap and/or assassinate individual Westerners.

8. These incidents argue strongly that U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia should maintain a low profile, keep travel to a minimum, vary travel routes and times, and treat any mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion. American citizens are also cautioned to remain alert and aware of their surroundings while driving or riding.

9. Effective January 1, 2005, country clearance approval for

all TDY visits of 30 days or longer requires advance certification to post that appropriate mandatory overseas personal security training will be completed prior to travel.

If time or urgency of mission does not allow for the completion of this mandatory training, the country clearance request should note the circumstances and request a waiver from the Chief of Mission.

¶10. In addition, all visitors to the U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia are required to contact the RSO within 48 hours of their arrival, to schedule a post-specific security briefing, mandatory for all PCS and TDY personnel, regardless of the duration of your stay.

¶11. Travelers to Saudi Arabia are advised that their hotel rooms may be monitored during their stay in the Kingdom. Travelers should report any unusual occurrences to the Embassy or Consulate General RSO.

¶12. Medical: The Department of State medical unit recommends vaccination against meningitis for all visitors to Saudi Arabia. All employees, including WAEs and Civil Service employees who are in TDY status for more than 60 days (cumulatively) in a calendar year, are required to have up-to-date medical clearances from the Office of Medical Services at Class 1 or Class 2 levels in order to receive full State Department medical benefits (3 FAM 1931.3, c,e).

¶13. Drugs: Saudi Arabia has strict penalties for violators of its narcotics laws. Prescription drugs in small quantities, clearly labeled, should cause no difficulties. Problems arise when they are in large quantities, unlabeled, or lack documentation (such as a copy of the prescription), or when they are deemed illicit by Saudi authorities. Many drugs sold in nearby countries without a prescription are considered illegal here. Individuals are arrested for possession of these drugs.

¶14. Customs: Strict Islamic law is the foundation of the Kingdom's customs and practices. The norms for public behavior are extremely conservative. Saudi Arabia outlaws the importation, sale or use of alcohol in the Kingdom, and visitors should not bring any pork products or printed materials that may be construed as pornographic in their personal luggage.

¶15. Dress: Men and women should dress in a conservative fashion when in public. In particular, women should wear long dresses (well below the knee) with long sleeves and avoid trousers. Embassy women do not wear abayyas (long black coat) when out on official business and women TDY visitors when on official business also should not wear one.

¶16. The guidance issued by the Saudi Embassy in Washington states that non-Muslim women are not required to wear an abayya, but should dress conservatively (loose fitting dresses that cover well below the knee with long sleeves and a high neckline) when in public; that is also the position of the Embassy. However, some Western women, particularly those living in the Riyadh area and in the more conservative central region, choose to wear an abayya when in public places and carry a headscarf in order to avoid harassment by the religious police known as the mutawwa'in. However, even with the abayya and scarf, harassment still occurs. The Embassy will support a woman in whatever personal choice she makes on the issue of wearing or not wearing an abayya or headscarf.

¶17. Costs: Embassy Riyadh direct charges TDYers or each office, agency or visiting delegation for all costs incurred in support of official travel. These costs include American and Foreign Service National employees' overtime, holiday pay and premium pay as applicable, field travel by Embassy personnel, transportation costs, vehicle rental, telephone installation and service, cell phone rentals and telephone calls, equipment rental, printing expenses, and any other costs that can be directly attributed to the visit. Please be prepared to provide fiscal data upon arrival to cover all potential costs.

¶18. Electronic Items in the Embassy: The Embassy approves the use of the computers and digital cameras with the standard caveat that nothing is connected to DOS systems. Stand-alone use of laptops is allowed, as are digital cameras, but computers must stay outside of the CAA areas. Prior notification of the use of cameras must be approved by the RSO.

¶19. Embassy visitors are reminded to keep their passports with them at all times while in Saudi Arabia as they may be needed for identification.

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